

Message Text

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ACTION TRSE-00

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 SNM-02 AID-05 DEAE-00 H-02

DODE-00 SAB-01 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 /024 W

----- 037734

R 062020Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8697

INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS

PANCANAL

USCINCSO

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE PANAMA 5487

DEPARTMENT PASS DEA

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: SNAR, XM

SUBJECT: DETECTOR DOG TRAINING - LATIN AMERICAN REGIONAL
CENTER: QUERIES

REFS: A. STATE 182037, B. CARACAS 4570

1. REFTELS EXPRESS INTEREST OF U.S. CUSTOMS SERVICE AND DEA CARACAS IN PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT OF "DETECTOR DOG" TRAINING CAPABILITY FOR LATIN AMERICA. AS WELL, THEY SUGGEST CZ AS POSSIBLE SITE OF TRAINING CENTER. REF. (B) REQUESTED EMBASSY TO CALL MEETING OF DEA/PANAMA, EMBASSY, AND SOUTHCOM OFFICIALS TO DISCUSS PROS AND CONS OF PROPOSAL AND OF CENTER'S LOCATION.

2. EMBASSY AND DEA/PANAMA OFFICIALS MET LAST WEEK TO MULL OVER PROPOSAL PRELIMINARY TO REQUESTED MEETING. WE PLAN TO CALL MEETING SHORTLY, BUT SUGGEST THAT PROPOSAL, AS IT NOW STANDS, IS SO VAGUE THAT OUR DISCUSSION OF IT COULD ONLY BE SUPERFICIAL. WE RAISED THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS, AND WOULD APPRECIATE U.S. CUSTOMS' THOUGHTS ON THEM.

3. (A) WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE FACILITY: (1) TO TRAIN

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HANDLERS ON A CONTINUING BASIS IN LIEU OF NATIONAL

FACILITIES; OR (2) TO TRAIN TRAINERS FOR EMPLOYMENT
IN NATIONAL CENTERS? IS IT ASSUMED THIS WOULD BE THE
ONLY CENTER IN THIS AREA OR WILL EACH COUNTRY BE ENCOURAGED
TO DEVELOP ITS OWN FACILITIES?

(B) IS THERE A REGIONAL DEMAND FOR DETECTOR DOGS? IF SO
WHAT IS IT?

(C) POSITING A DEMAND, WHAT WOULD THE TRAINING FACILITY'S
VOLUME PER ANNUM BE? (FYI: WE GATHER USEFUL LIFE OF
DETECTOR DOGS IS 2-3 YEARS. HENCE TURNOVER WOULD APPEAR
TO BE HIGH.)

(D) WHAT FACILITIES WOULD A TRAINING CENTER NEED FOR
OPERATION, I.E., HOW LARGE AN AREA, WHAT CONFIGURATION,
DORMITORIES FOR HANDLERS, ETC.

(E) WHAT ARE THE EXPENSES? INITIAL OPERATION WOULD BE BY
U.S. CUSTOMS SERVICE, SUBSEQUENTLY, LATIN AMERICANS WOULD
BE IN CHARGE. HOW EAGER WOULD LATIN COUNTRIES BE TO
ASSUME COSTS? WOULD OTHER ALTERNATIVES (I.E., STATE-SIDE
TRAINING) BE MORE ECONOMICAL?

(F) WHY THE CANAL ZONE? WHAT ARE THE GEOGRAPHIC, TECHNICAL
OR STRATEGIC REASONS WHICH ARGUE FOR A CENTER IN PANAMA?
WOULD THE POTENTIAL PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES HAVE POLITICAL
RESERVATIONS ABOUT TRAINING IN THE CANAL ZONE PENDING A
NEW TREATY ON THE CANAL? WHAT EFFECT WOULD THE NEW
CANAL TREATY HAVE ON THE TRAINING CENTER?

(G) DOES OR DOES NOT DETECTOR DOG TRAINING SMACK OF POLICE
DOG OR RIOT CONTROL DOG TRAINING? WOULD SUCH A PROGRAM
INFRINGE ON THE CONGRESSIONAL INJUNCTION AGAINST PUBLIC
SAFETY TRAINING? WHAT ARE THE COSTS IN PUBLIC RELATIONS
TERMS OF ITS EXPLOITATION BY ANTI-U.S. GROUPS, ESPECIALLY
OF A FACILITY IN THE CANAL ZONE AT THIS TIME?

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DOGS, DRUG CONTROL, PERSONNEL TRAINING
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 AUG 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: blochd0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976PANAMA05487
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760304-0981
From: PANAMA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760877/aaaacpbr.tel
Line Count: 98
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION TRSE
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 STATE 182037, 76 CARACAS 4570
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: blochd0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 JUL 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21 JUL 2004 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <28 OCT 2004 by blochd0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DETECTOR DOG TRAINING - LATIN AMERICAN REGIONAL CENTER: QUERIES
TAGS: SNAR, XM
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006